

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 DPW-01 IO-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 T-03 OMB-01 RSR-01 /097 W
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R 191136 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8847

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

AMCONGEN DANANG

JAKARTA 1517

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USDEL FRANCE

AMCONGEN BIEN HOA

AMCONGEN CAN THO

AMCONGEN NHA TRANG

S E C R E T SAIGON 4468

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. IN A CONVERSATION WITH AN EMBOFF MAR 18 NGUYEN BA CAN CHAIRMAN OF THE LOWER HOUSE EXPLAINED THE REASONS WHY HE HAD DECIDED TO ABANDON HIS POSITION AS SEC GEN OF THE WORKER FARMER PARTY (WFP) AND TO JOIN THE ADMINISTRATION' S DEMOCRACY PARTY (DP). THE BURDEN OF CAN' S REATIONALIZATION WAS THAT IN THE COMING POLITICAL STRUGGLE THERE IS NO ROOM FOR A POLITICAL FORCE OR FORCES TO STAND BETWEEN THE COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION AND ANTI- COMMUNIST POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE GVN ADMINISTRATION.

2. CAN SAID HE WAS LEAVING THE WFP WITH REGRET BUT HE HAD COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT NEITHER THE WFP ALONE NOR ANY POSSIBLE COALITION OF PARTIES WOULD BE ABLE TO COMPETE EFFEC- TIVELY WITH THE COMMUNISTS IN A POLITICAL STRUGGLE. HE SAID
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THAT THE HAD BECOME INCREASINGLY CONVINCED THAT THE WFP COULD NEVER BE A POWERFUL POLITICAL FORCE BECAUSE

(A) THE CVT, ON WHICH THE WFP IS BASED WAS TOO PERMEATED WITH CORRUPTION AND INCOMPETENCE AT THE PROVINCE, DISTRICT AND VILLAGE LEVELS. HE CITED CVT CHAPTERS IN QUANG NGAI, MY THO, SAIGON AND BIEN HOA AS PARTICULARLY FLAGRANT EXAMPLES;

(B) THE EFFICACY OF THE WFP HAD BEEN GREATLY RESTRICTED BY THE INFLUENCE WHICH OLD LINE CVT MEMBERS ATTEMPTED TO ASSERT OVER IT. THESE LEADERS, CAN SAID, FEEL THAT THE 20 YEAR HISTORY OF THE CVT ENTITLES THEM TO EXCESSIVE INFLUENCE OVER THE WFP. THE RESULT HAS BEEN THAT THE WFP COULD NEVER BECOME A " HARD HITTING" ORGANIZATION. THE WFP WAS FURTHER WEAKENED HE SAID BY THE FACT THAT IT HAS A CLOSE IDENTIFICATION WITH " THE AMERICANS" IN THE MINDS OF SOME VIETNAMESE.

3. THE CVT, CAN CONTINUED CANNOT REALLY BECOME A FORCE SEPARATE FROM THE ADMINISTRATION BECAUSE ITS COMPONENT ELEMENTS DEPEND IN MANY WAYS ON OFFICIAL PERMITS OR FAVOR TO PERATE.

4. CAN SAID THIS VULNERABILITY OF THE CVT HAD MADE POSSIBLE LARGE SCALE RAIDS BY THE DEMOCRACY PARTY ON WFP CADRE. HE ESTIMATED THAT MORE THAN HALF OF THESE CADRES HAD TURNED OVER TO THE DP SIMPLY BECAUSE OF THIS DEPENDENCE UPON ADMINISTRATION FAVOR. CAN SAID MANY OF THE PEOPLE IN HIS INDEPENDENCE BLOC IN THE LOWER HOUSE, WFP MEMBERS THEMSELVES, FELT OBLIGED TO JOIN THE DP BECAUSE OF THEIR DEPENDENCE IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER ON ADMINISTRATION FAVOR. CAN IMPLIED THIS HAD LEFT HIM IN AN ISOLATED POSITION.

5. CAN SAID IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR A POLITICAL FORCE TO " STAND IN THE MIDDLE" BETWEEN THE COMMUNISTS AND THE ADMINISTRATION. HE SAID THAT " YOU HAVE TO BE REALISTIC ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN SOUTH VIETNAM TODAY WHEN PEOPLE VOTE THEY HAVE EITHER A COMMUNIST HELD KNIFE AT THEIR BACKS OR ONE HELD BY THE ADMINISTRATION". AS AN EXAMPLE HE CITED HIS OWN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN TO THE LOWER HOUSE WHEN COMMUNIST CADRE NEAR MY THO SOUGHT TO FORCE VILLAGES TO VOTE FOR A CANDIDATE NAMED GIAU, WHILE THE LOCAL PROVINCE ADMINISTRATION PRESSURED THEM TO VOTE FOR HIM. HE SAID THAT EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON WHO CAN MAKE THE THREAT STICK. IN THIS SITUATION HE SAID NO THIRD GROUP LACKING PHYSICAL FORCE CAN HOPE TO BE EFFECTIVE IN AN ELECTION IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

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6. ACCORDING TO CAN, PRESIDENT THIEU" KNOWS VERY WELL" THAT THE DP INCLUDES MANY CORRUPT ELEMENTS. THIEU' S PLAN ACCORDING TO CAN IS TO CONCENTRATE A MAXIMUM OF VOTE CONTROLLING INFLUENCE IN THE DP WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME IN PREPARATION FOR IMMINENT ELECTIONS AFTER WHICH THE DP' S RANKS WOULD BE " CLEANED UP".

7. CAN SAID THAT LEADERSHIP OF THE DP WAS WEAK, SENATOR LE VAN DONG WOULD BE PUT IN CHARGE OF PROPAGANDA, TRAINING AND ORGANIZATION AND COMMENTED THAT DONG' S FORMER POSITION AS DIRECTOR OF MASS ACTIVITIES IN THE CAN LAO PARTY DID NOT SIT WELL WITH MANY VIETNAMESE. SENATOR NGAI HE SAID WOULD BE IN CHARGE OF THE PARTY' S EXTERNAL RELATIONS. NGAI ACCORDING TO CAN IS KNOWN TO BE INCORRUPT AND DEDICATED BUT HE IS NOT WELL REGARDED BECAUSE HE IS BELIEVED TO HAVE ATTEMPTED TO POISON PRESIDENT THIEU' S MIND CONCERNING OTHER PROMINENT POLITICAL LEADERS, INCLUDING TRAN QUO BUU, HA THUC KY AND NGUYEN NGOC HUY, BY SPREADING FALSE STORIES OF THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD THIEU. CAN DISMISSED PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT NGUYEN VAN NGAN AS A " YOUNG MAN WITH NO KNOWLEDGE OF POLITICAL ORGNIZATION."

8. ASKED WHETHER OR NOT CAN THOUGHT THAT IN THE COMING POLITICAL STRUGGLE VIETNAMESE SHOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE FOR AN ANTI COMMUNIST NATIONALIST OTHER THAN NGUYEN VAN THIEU, CAN REPLIED BY REPEATING FAMILIAR CRITICISMS OF VIETNAMESE NATIONALIST POLITICIANS, THEY ARE UNWILLING TO STAND UP AND MAKE A STRONG STATEMENT OF THEIR POSITION(HE CITED TRAN QUOC BUU AS AN EXAMPLE); AND THEY ARE BY NA
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